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Mary of Magdala, or
The Magdalene of Old
By Dolores Cortez

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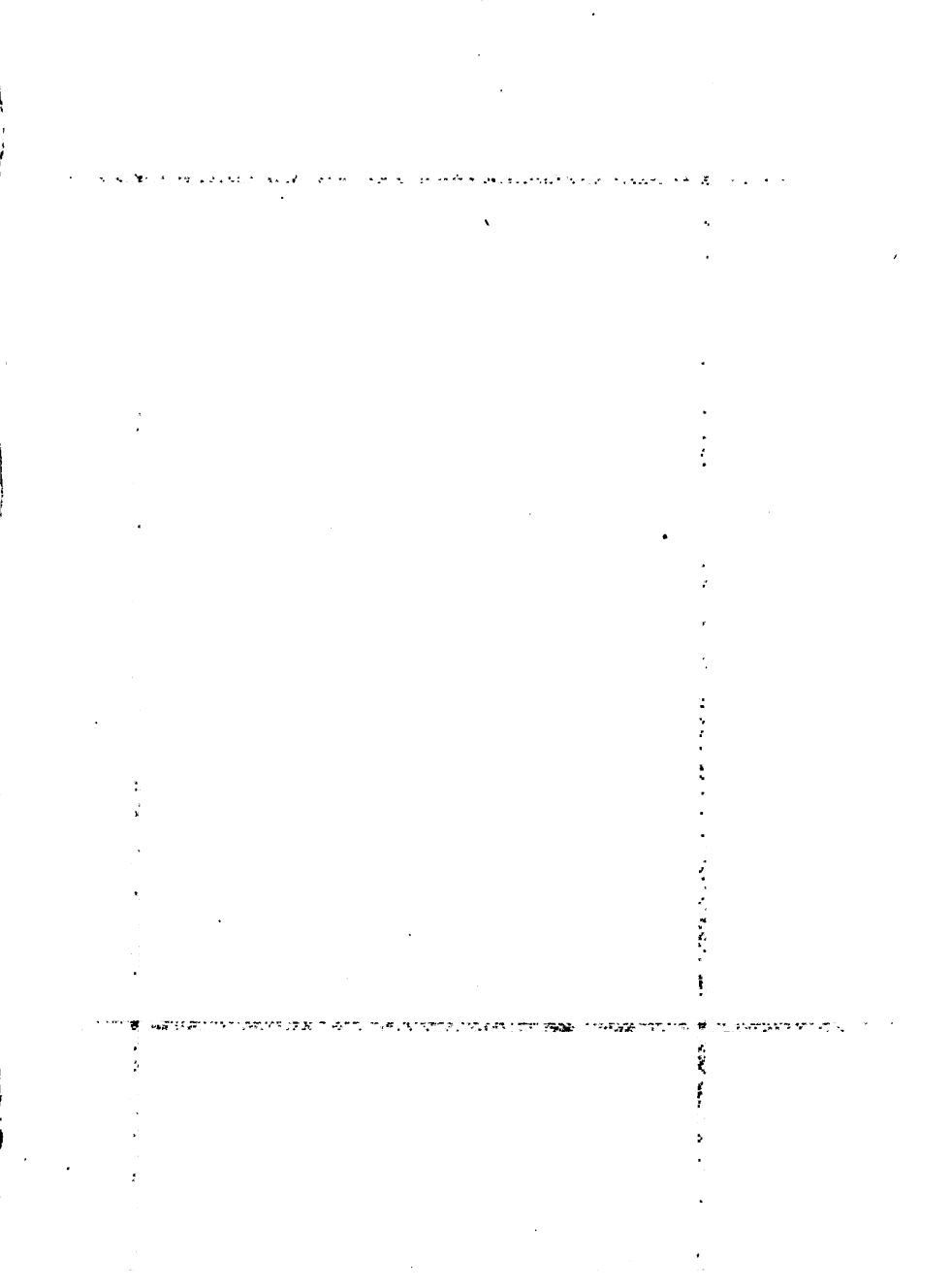
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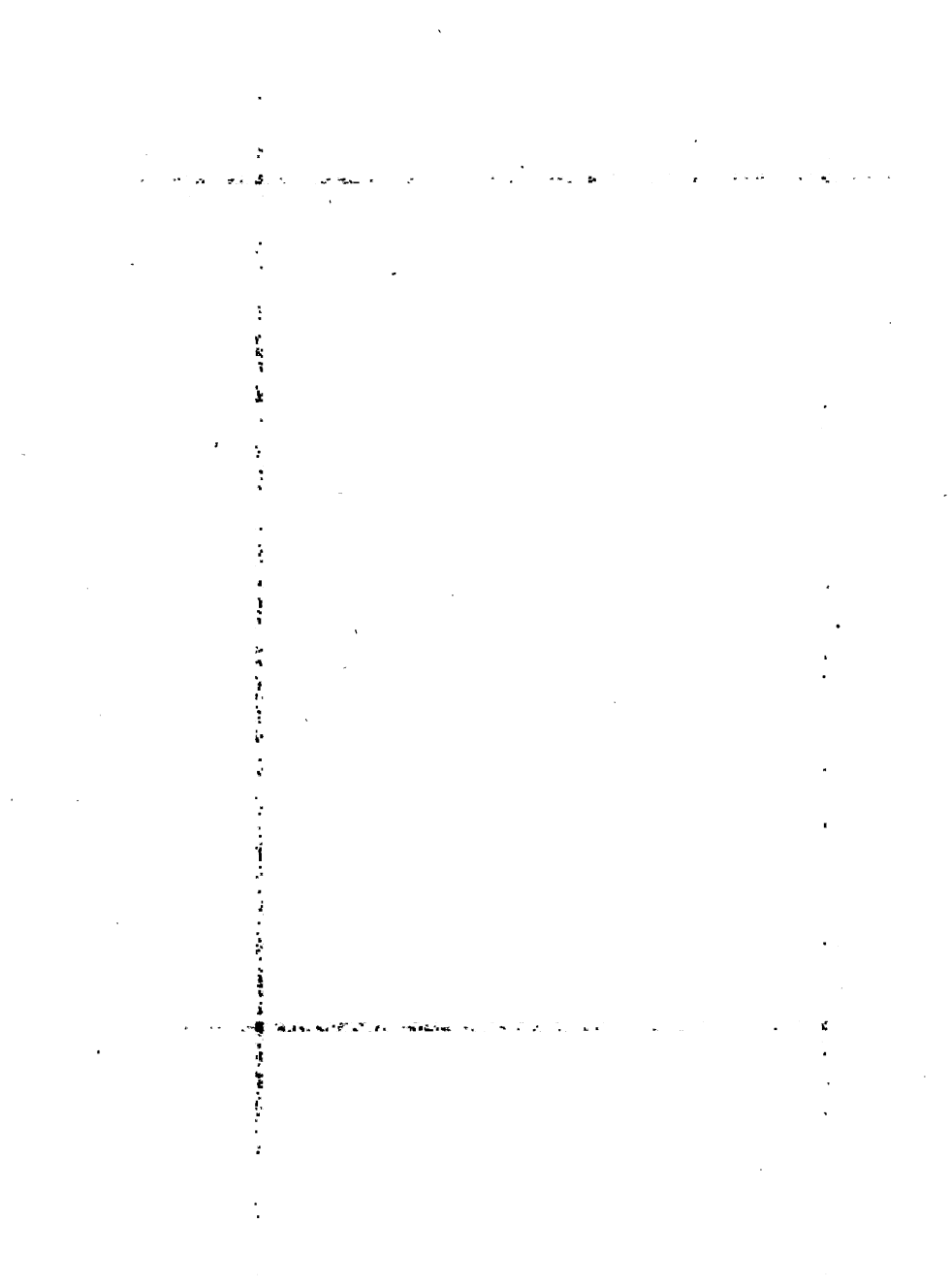
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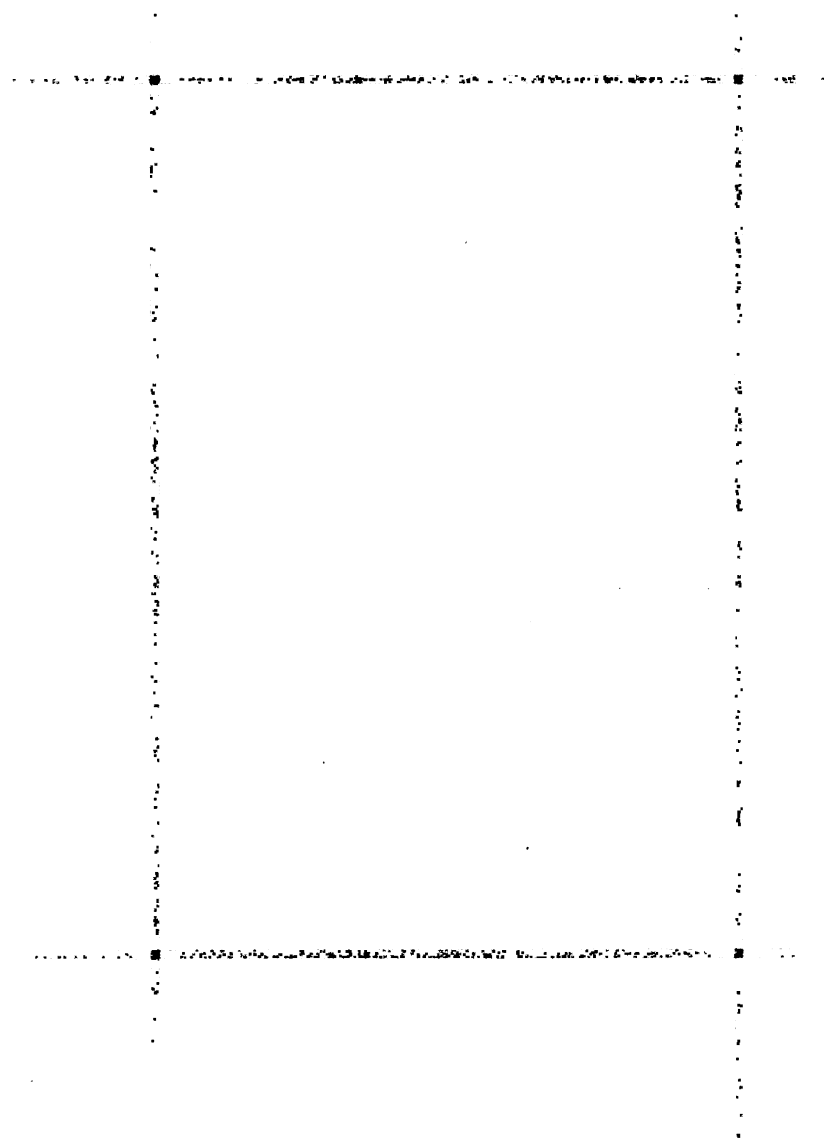


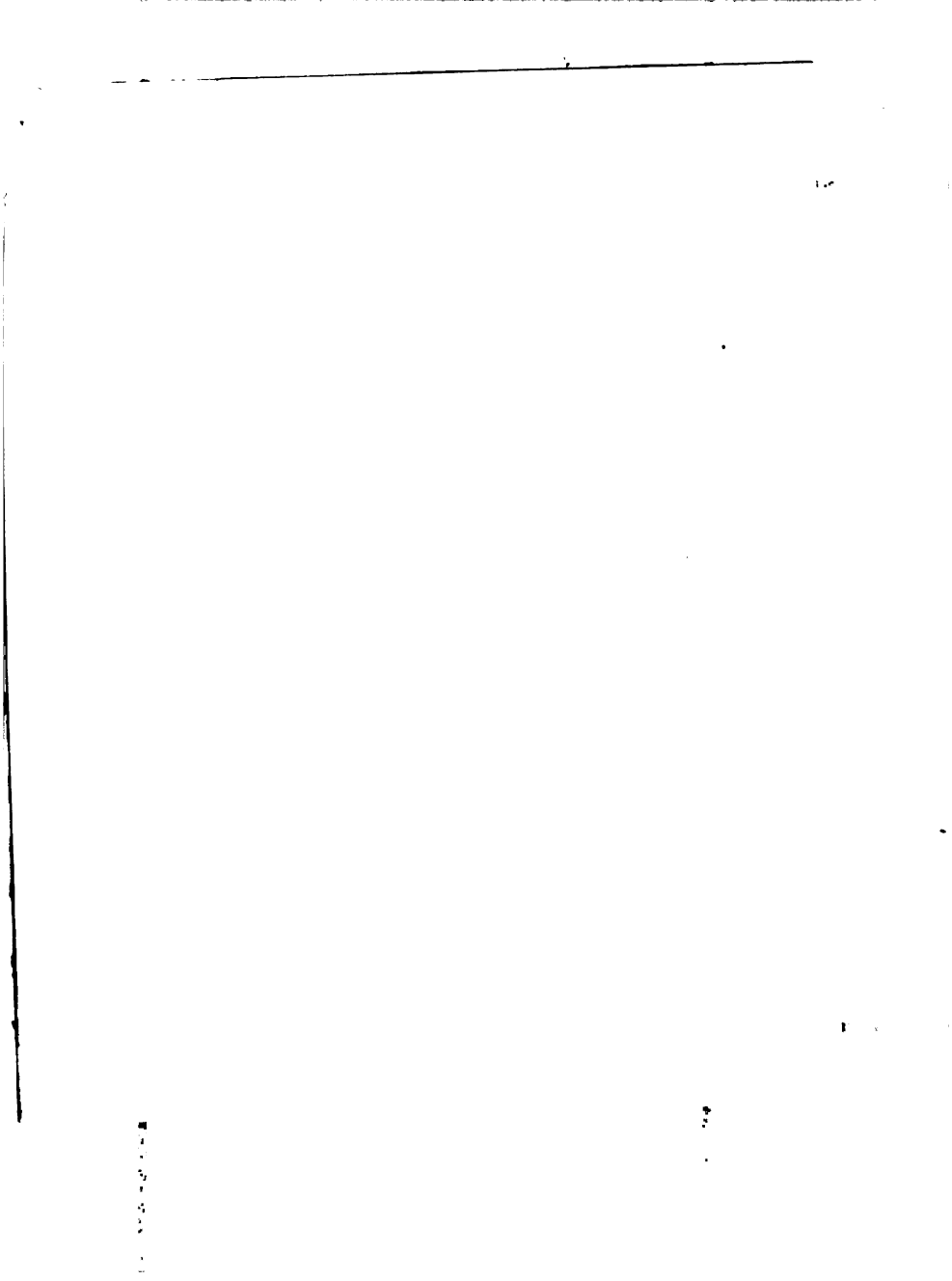


May this little volume
be a suggestion of
oriental love and
the adoration of the
Gypsy for the Divine
in man.

-The Author

457 D. St.,
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October 8 - 1906





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Mary of Magdala
or the Magdalene of Old

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Mary of Magdala
or the Magdalene of Old

an interpretation

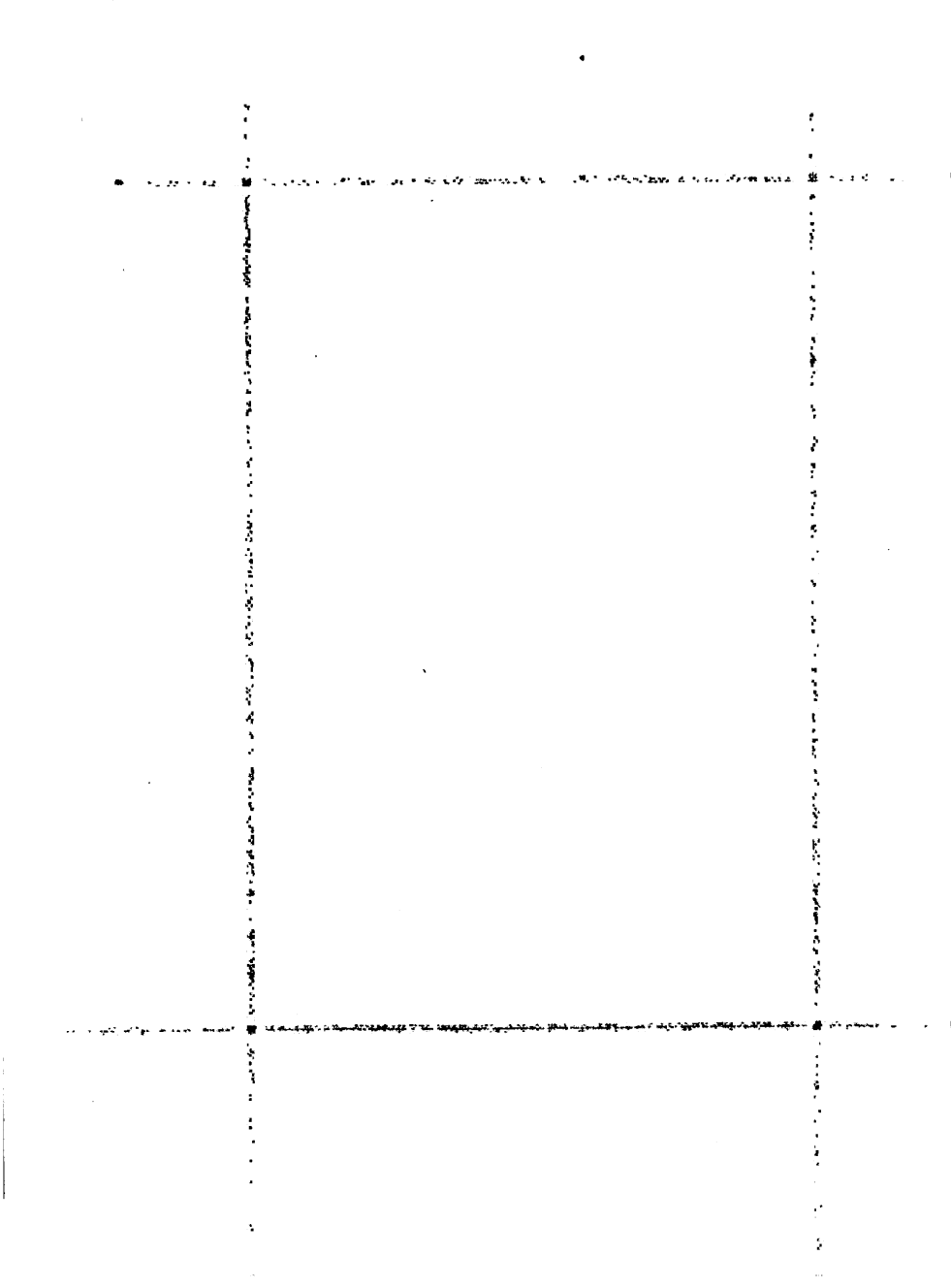
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Queen of the Gonzales

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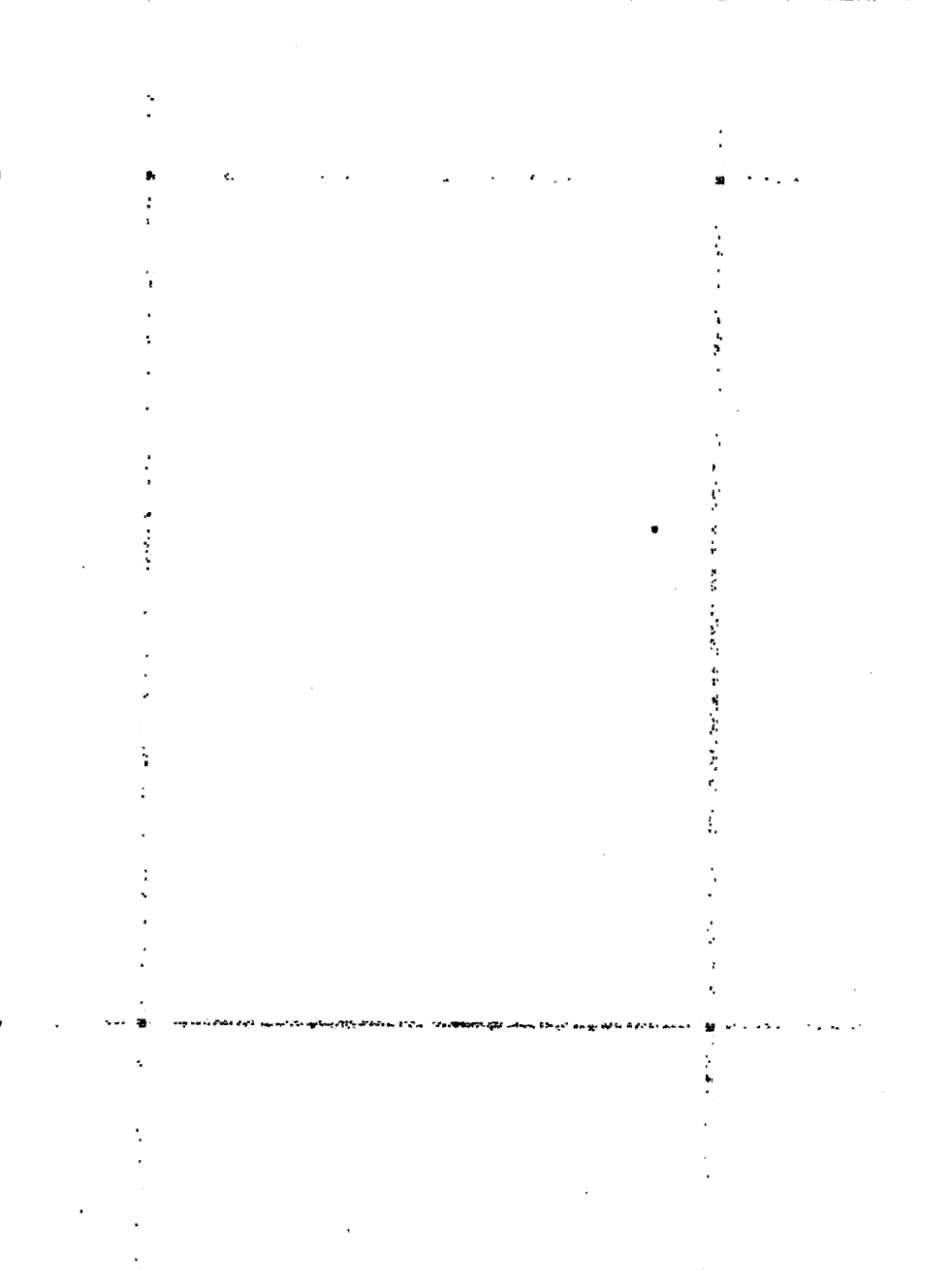
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of Today**

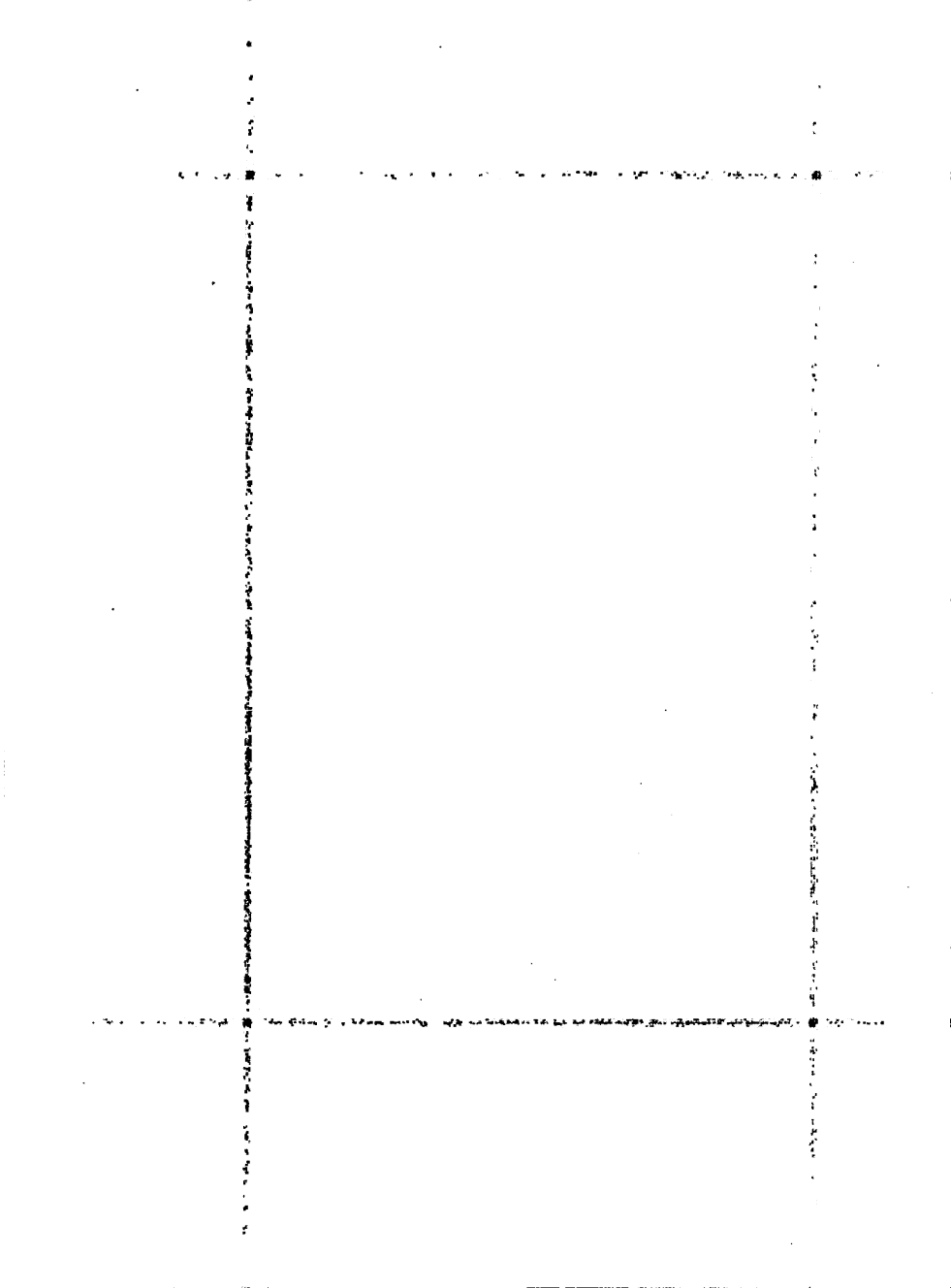


INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Mary of Magdala is an inspiration of my own. Although the Bible gives but slight mention of this repented sinner, its accounts being rather allegorical, there is truth for the foundation of every myth. Let Mary of Magdala have been the daughter of the Davids, a person who existed in flesh and blood, or merely a principle, I set forth the story representing her as a beautiful oriental creature with her abundant animal spirits misguided and untamed, whom one glance from the Divine Nazarene had the power to transform and bring into harmony with divine law.

I put this tale before the world as an example to the Magdalenes of to-day, being an introduction to a story of greater length and its sequel, entitled : "A Child of the Slums, or a Magdalene of To-day," which is ready for publication.





An Interpretation

MARY OF MAGDALA, OR THE MAGDALENE OF OLD



HE sun was setting over Jerusalem. Jetting fountains were sending their streams of water to the skies and falling and spreading in drops of topaz, sapphire and ruby, like tears of angels weeping over the sinful city. The terraced gardens on the palace roofs; the scent of the orange and lemon trees bordering the walks; the great scarlet blooms of the centennial lotus; the dark green of the cedars of Lebanon, all, all, was breathing with sensuous life. The simple shepherds were

Mary of Magdala, or

defiled by their contact with the exquisite Greek and the luxurious Roman.

The palace of the Davids stood on a rising ground at the edge of the city, prominent in its magnificence. Slaves were arranging cushions under the drooping acacias, preparatory to the coming of their mistress, who this moment appeared walking nonchalantly through the garden attended by a train of servants. She reached the cushions and fell with indolent grace among them, drooping her heavy eyelids like a bacchante after the orgy. Little knaves, like bronze Cupids, standing aside of the golden pedestals here and there, upholding cups of

The Magdalene of Old

incense, were sending perfumes in the air with little jewelled rods. Graceful white, half-naked slave girls were surrounding their mistress like a frame, fanning her and waiting to obey her slightest wish. Near by, a group of fair maidens under a palm tree, half hidden by flowers, were singing snatches of love songs in low, mellow tones, accompanied by their stringed instruments—love songs to make the very roses blush.

The beauty among the cushions fell into a dreamy reverie and all became silent. Miriam, her confidante, at length suddenly, yet quietly, approached her and whispered:

“Hark! The music! We must

Mary of Magdala, or

haste to the feast. They are waiting."

A faint melody of harps and lyres was borne to them on the wings of the breezes from the distance.

The splendid creature to whom these words were addressed, awoke from her reverie and turned her shapely head indolently toward the sound.

"Let them wait," she replied languidly, "the waiting will fill them with stronger desires."

"Miriam," she went on, "tell Yuba to dress my hair high; its weight is too much over my shoulders this evening. I dreamed last night that invisible hands had piled it on my head in a pyramid" and she raised herself into a sitting posture.

The Magdalene of Old

Yuba obeyed silently and the great mass of hair was arranged on the head of her mistress like a tower of gold, held up by two jewelled daggers.

A sound of tramping feet on the street below startled her.

"What is it?" she asked of her confidante.

The latter went over to the railing that surrounded the garden and looked down.

"It is that fanatic whom they call the Nazarene and his crowd of beggars," she replied, turning to her mistress.

"The Nazarene?" reiterated the voluptuous woman. "The Nazarene? It is said that he is the handsomest being God ever created and the only

Mary of Magdala, or

man who has never given a thought to women. I want to see him."

She rose in all the glory of her beauty and moved with a slow, undulating motion toward the terrace railing. Though of middle stature, she had a magnificent presence and the voluptuous curves of her form were disclosing themselves through the draperies of her rich garment of damask, seal and gold, lined with the palest blue and held together with clasps studded with precious stones. The rosy pink of her dainty feet and nails were gleaming in their elegant sandals. Her jewelled anklets glittered, but her arms and fingers wore no circlets, as ornaments would have

The Magdalene of Old

marred their dimpled proportions. Reaching the terrace railing, she looked into the multitude below and discovered the man in his loose robes of pure white, evidently the leader and the person called the Nazarene.

"Miriam! See, the Nazarene! He is glorious! His eye, his hair, his nose, his lips, his whole bearing is perfection! He is the king of the universe! I want to go to him, to bring him to my feet, to take him with me in triumph to the feast! Who has ever resisted Mary of Magdala?"

Her face was a living flame. With her fine, delicate nostrils dilating, her sensual, scarlet lips quivering and showing her small, even, white teeth;

Mary of Magdala, or

her low brow—even her shell-like ears pulsing and throbbing with life, she was a woman of fire incarnated. Her shapely throat palpitated with passionate thirst and her voluptuous bosom heaved with inward emotion, endeavoring to free itself of the heavy garments that clung about it. Her alabaster flesh was sweet and fresh as a child's and was exuding perfume that drew men involuntarily as the rich, fragrant nectar of a beautiful flower draws a bee. She ordered some of her slaves to follow her and descended the imposing marble steps of the palace with the vigorous, graceful, undulating movements of a young panther. When

The Magdalene of Old

she reached the street, angry shouts arose from the multitude.

"Mary of Magdala ! The harlot of Jerusalem !"

The Nazarene turned his head in the direction of this commotion to find what caused it.

"I will conquer him," whispered Mary of Magdala to Miriam exultingly. "He looked at me."

The crowd grew more indignant at the boldness of the sinner in following their beloved teacher, when the Nazarene turned to her again.

"He is mine ! I shall indeed take him with me as a trophy to the feast. The fires of love shall burn forever. Mary of Magdala is not a vampire ; she

Mary of Magdala, or

feeds, she increases the vital forces of men. He shall know me even more fully than any other has known" and she grasped Miriam by the hand and appeared like a splendid, young feline aroused.

"Stone her!" shouted a man in the crowd.

A look of reproach from the Nazarene rebuked and calmed the indignation of the multitude. He passed onward a few paces when his divine glance once more rested on the magnificent, public sinner.

The latter's step faltered and she trembled—she knew not why. She could not endure the light that shone from this wonderful being's eyes, a

The Magdalene of Old

light of celestial brightness and that had in it the mysteries of the Infinite. She felt humbled and ashamed. Her eyes fell and saw her bare shoulders and half-nude body. For the first time in her thirty years, she blushed. Quickly she seized the jewelled daggers that held together her hair, threw them from her and the mass fell about her like a mantle of gold and covered her nakedness. She took a few steps forward and threw herself at the feet of the Nazarene, hard, remorseful sobs convulsing her frame. Her shame, her agony, her intense reverence for the being before her, swept over her like a storm. The re-

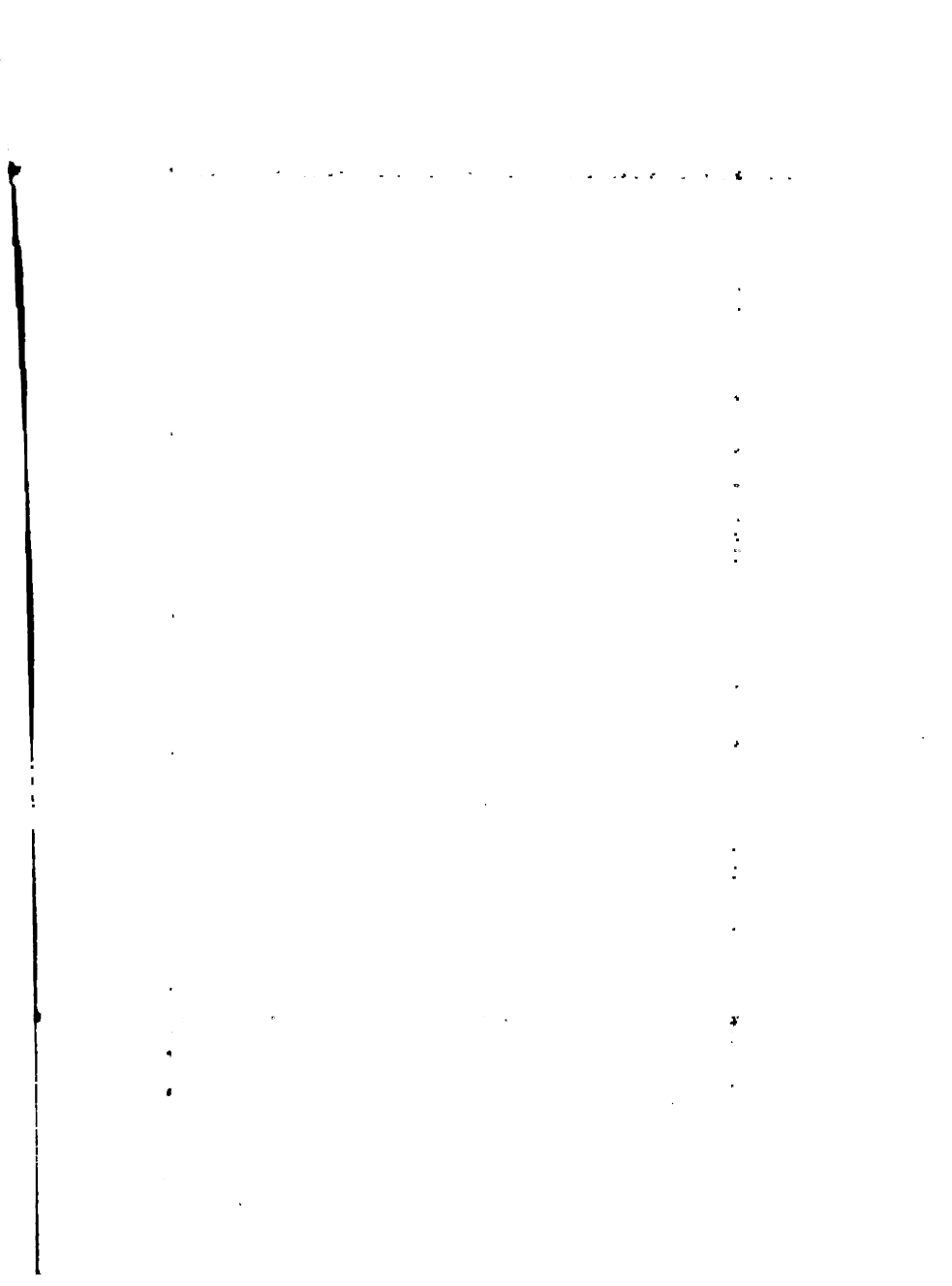
Mary of Magdala

vulsion of feeling was beyond language.
She could only weep.

With pitying gentleness the
Nazarene raised her from the ground.

“Go, and sin no more.”

The multitude stood amazed. The
harlot of Jerusalem was transfigured.
A pure, serene brightness was reflected
upon her and she stood like a seraph
inspired. Her soul had awakened.



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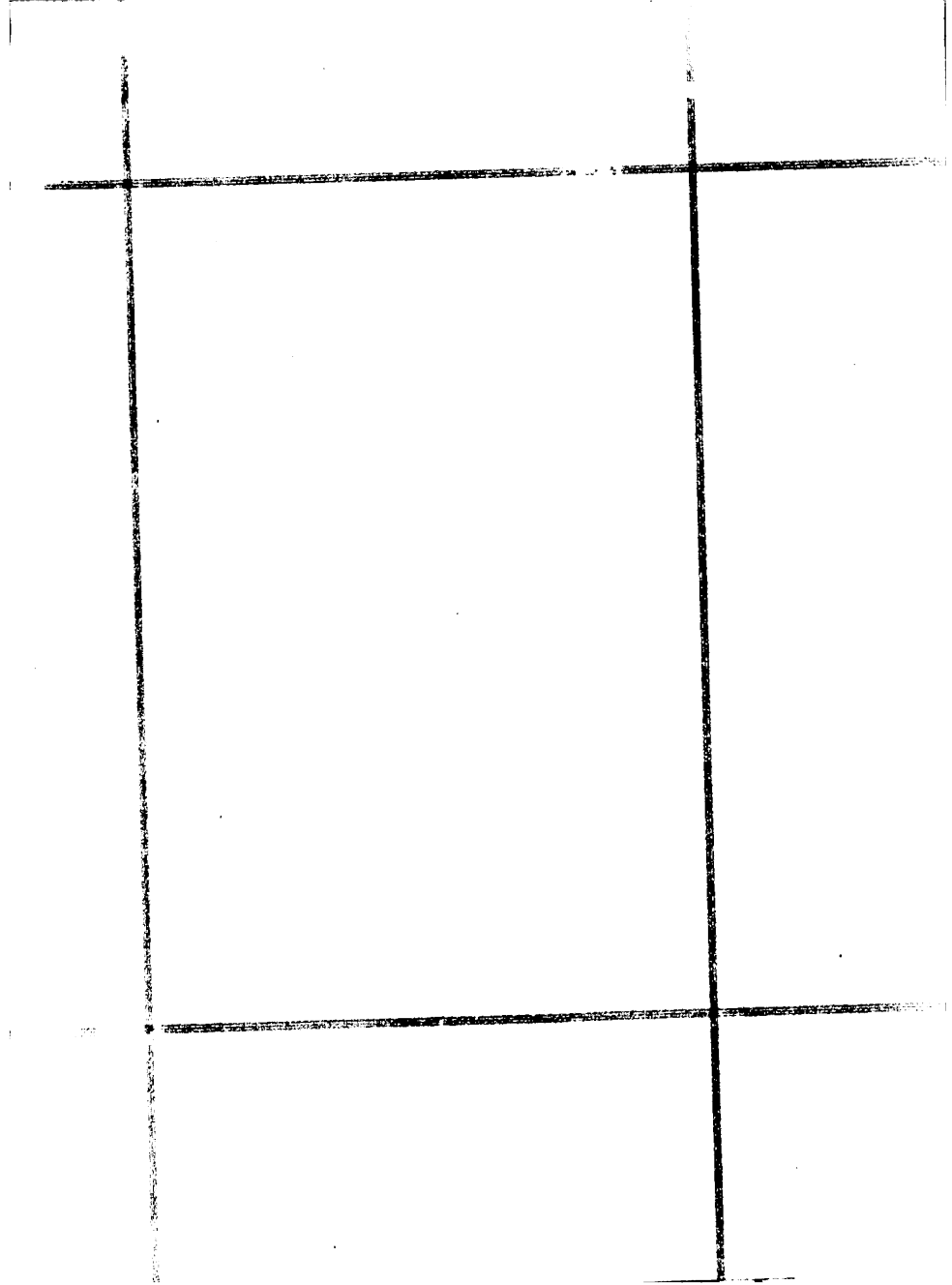
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